

FRANKLIN COUNTY

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PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Financial stability in economic development for the citizens of Franklin County
2. Easy access to quality early literacy programs for children
3. Substance abuse prevention/intervention

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.

Health - Children's (0 - 19)

physical and mental well-being in the county.

Many children lack access to health care: this includes medical, dental, vision, and mental health care, as well as substance abuse treatment

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify children who need health insurance by working with schools, medical facilities, and other agencies through referrals, surveying, and access to existing data base
- assist families in the process of applying for medical insurance and other family support services by helping to complete applications
- make ALL KIDS, Medicaid, and Child Caring Foundation forms available in language appropriate version at a variety of public locations

The need for preventive health care awareness

Policy Council Action Steps:

- target three or more preventable health conditions
- disseminate information about the prevention of these identified health conditions to the public through the media, medical facilities, schools, and other support
- initiate a parenting support group in schools, hospitals, health department, and other community agencies for child health and well being issues

Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

High drug and alcohol Abuse among teens

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek funding and gain support for a teen drug court
- seek funding and gain support from schools and community agencies to initiate random drug testing and referral services required for mandatory outpatient services
- start the steps and investigate a mentor program (i.e. Big Brothers/Big Sisters or FOCUS program) for potential use with at-risk students

Sexual Abuse/Abuse and Neglect Prevention

Policy Council Action Steps:

- education in the schools and community agencies will be geared both toward the youth and the professional staff
- increase social worker, school nurses, and counseling services for schools and non-traditional setting
- initiate a parenting support group in schools, hospitals, health department, and other community agencies for pregnant and parenting teens

Crisis management for high risk youth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- pass laws regarding possession of guns on school property and activities as a criminal act
- enforce a uniform attendance policy for all county students
- establish a transition program for children returning to the community after an extended absence from structural programs

Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Increase student success

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek funding to continue creating success (WIA, alternative programs, and after school/summer programs) and develop new lines of funding
- seek funding for ESL support services including teachers, aids, and appropriate instructional materials
- seek funding for increasing test scores through intervention programs

Increase in school safety

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek funding for cameras, security systems and alarms for the schools to increase the school safety
- seek funding for resources officers for the schools
- seek funding for an increase in push bars on doors in the schools and other county agencies

Early Care and

Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Children in county need easy access to quality early literacy programs so they develop needed and appropriate skills for schools readiness resulting in children ready to learn when they begin school

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide local centers with information about the importance of quality literacy programs through local training opportunities that exist through the Northwest Shoals child development program, DHR quality grant program now serving county providers
- educate parents about the importance of quality literacy programs through local parent education programs existing through county parenting grant
- county providers will continue to participate in the free book mail-out offered through the Northwest-Shoals Community college DHR quality grant which provides quality children's literature to the county families and daycare providers

Need access to early intervention programs including screening for such programs identifying each child's level of development relating to emotional, social, physical, and cognitive growth

Policy Council Action Steps:

- identify area referral agencies and service providers
- conduct awareness campaigns relating to early intervention for parents, teachers, care-givers both in English and Spanish
- seek funding sources if needed to supplement programs in place

Helping parents and children in the county obtain access to quality preschool and pre-k programs by helping to identify quality centers and providing information to parents on indicators of quality (National Association for the Education of Young Children indicators)

Policy Council Action Steps:

- provide information to local centers, pre-k's and Head Start sites on N.A.E.Y.C. accreditation
- incorporate the "STARS" program adopted by the Northwest Alabama director's association (N.W.A.D.A.) into local licensed county family and daycare programs

Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Increase the availability of employment in the county

Policy Council Action Steps:

- through collaboration with appropriate entities, strategically plan and implement programs that would encourage young adults to have the desire to seek employment locally
- seek funding for an increase in the employment opportunities in county
- network to communicate the awareness of migration of those educated locally but are leaving the area for employment

Increase in more financial stability in economic development for the citizens of the county

Policy Council Action Steps:

- seek funding for rural economic development opportunities in the county
- seek funding for personnel to help recruit economic development for the county
- collaborate with job training, and education sites to enhance or implement an increase in economic development in the county

Parent Involvement

and Skills - Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Increase parent education and involvement in poor family discipline

Policy Council Action Steps:

- sentence or refer parents to the Parenting Project training
- increase the parent education and involvement through parenting classes
- seek funding for personnel and supplies to teach family discipline

Initiate a parenting support group in schools, hospitals, health department, and other community agencies for pregnant and parenting teens

Policy Council Action Steps:

- form a parent resource directory
- promote education and support groups for pregnant teens in the schools and community
- create an environment for parents to be involved in the education of their children interest by integrating technology and academics

Policy Recommendation

1. Provide adequate funding for early child intervention programs
2. Provide adequate funding for personnel to teach early child intervention programs
3. Enforce a uniform attendance policy for all county students
4. Establish a transition program for children returning to the community after an extended absence from structural programs
5. Provide funding for drug testing in the schools
6. Adequate funding for social workers and nurses services to be in the school setting
7. Support legislature for increase in funding and sentence parents to parenting classes
8. Adequate funding for a family resource center in the county
9. Adequate funding for pre-school programs specifically pre-k for 4 year olds

Additional Franklin County Children's Policy Council Members:

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